The independent claims have been amended to further distinguish Applicants' invention from the cited art.

The amendments to the claims were not presented earlier as it was believed that the previously presented claims would be found allowable. This Amendment does not add any additional claims. Moreover, the Examiner's familiarity with the subject matter of the present application will allow an appreciation of the significance of the amendments herein without undue expenditure of time and effort. Finally, the Amendment does not raise new issues requiring further consideration or search. Accordingly, it is believed that entry of the Amendment is appropriate.

Initially, Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the courtesy extended toward their representative during the personal interview of April 9, 2002. The interview focused primarily on Japanese Priority Document 6-10083 and U.S. Patent No. 5,577,191 (Bonomi).

Claims 62-72, 76-82 and 86 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Bonomi. Because the claims as amended above are submitted to be patentable over Bonomi, it is respectfully submitted that the issue of whether Bonomi can be removed as a reference by the JP '083 priority document is moot.

Applicants' invention as set forth in Claim 62 relates to an image processing apparatus comprised of input means for inputting image data encoded by using intra-picture coding and inter-picture coding, decoding means for decoding the input encoded image data, with the encoded image data including intra-picture encoded image data and inter-picture encoded image data, and first encoding means for performing intra-picture coding on the decoded image data and for storing the encoded image data in a storage medium. In addition,

editing means decodes the stored image data and edits the decoded image data, and second encoding means encodes the edited image data.

Claim 76 relates to an image processing method and corresponds substantially to Claim 62. Claim 76 has thus been amended to include the step of decoding the input encoded image data, with the encoded image data including intra-picture encoded image data and inter-picture encoded image data.

Claim 77 relates to an image processing apparatus comprised of input means for inputting image data encoded by using intra-picture coding and inter-picture coding, wherein the intra-picture coding is forcedly executed in a circle of a predetermined number of pictures, instructions means for instructing an image to be edited, and decoding means for decoding a part of the input encoded image data in accordance with the output of the instruction means. As amended, when the image to be edited has been subjected to inter-picture coding, the decoding means decodes the part of the encoded image data necessary to decode at least the image to be edited. In addition, editing means edits the image data processed by the decoding means, and encoding means encodes the image data processed by the editing means.

Claim 86 relates to an image processing method and corresponds substantially to Claim 77. Accordingly, the image processing method recites that when the image to be edited has been subjected to inter-picture coding, a decoding step decodes the part of the encoded image data necessary to decode at least the image to be edited.

In accordance with Applicants' claimed invention, image data encoded by inter-picture encoding and inter-picture encoding is decoded and edited. In this way an efficient and highly-productive image processing apparatus and method can be provided.

Bonomi relates to a video editing and publishing system that includes a video compression unit and a video decompression unit. As shown in Figure 1, the system includes a video capture circuit 102, a video compression unit 104 and a video decompression unit 105 that allows the system to receive video data in either digital or analog form and output compressed digital video data. As understood, in the video editing system of Bonomi, only intra-frame encoded data is decoded and edited. The edited image data is then encoded using intra-frame encoding and inter-frame encoding.

In contrast to Applicants' claimed invention, however, Bonomi is not read to teach or suggest, among other features, decoding and editing image data that includes intra-picture encoded image data and inter-picture encoded image data. As discussed above, the inter-frame encoded data in Bonomi is not decoded and edited as set forth in Applicants' claims.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) is respectfully requested.

Claims 73-75 and 83-85 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over Bonomi in view of Nguyen '437.

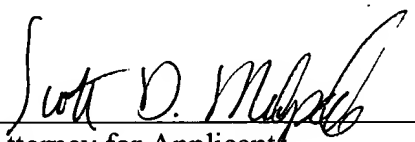
The secondary citation to Nguyen relates to a computer graphic system and was cited for its teaching of editing animation frames. Nguyen fails, however, to compensate for the deficiencies in Bonomi as discussed above. Accordingly, without conceding the propriety of combining Bonomi and Nguyen in the manner proposed in the Office Action, such a combination still fails to teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 73-75 and 83-85 under 35 U.S.C. §103 is respectfully requested.

Accordingly, it is submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in independent Claims 62, 76, 77 and 86 is patentable over the cited art. In addition, dependent Claims 63-75 and 78-85 set forth additional features of Applicants' invention. Independent consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of this application is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



Attorney for Applicants

Registration No. 32,533

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3801
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

SDM\rnm

DC_MAIN 92289 v 1

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE TO CLAIMS

62. (Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising:

a) input means for inputting image data encoded by using intra-picture coding and inter-picture coding;

b) decoding means for decoding the encoded image data input by said input means, the encoded image data including intra-picture encoded image data and inter-picture encoded image data;

c) first encoding means for performing intra-picture coding on the image data decoded by said decoding means, and for storing the encoded image data in a storage medium;

d) editing means for decoding the image data stored in the storage medium, and for editing the decoded image data; and

e) second encoding means for encoding the image data edited by said editing means.

76. (Amended) An image processing method comprising the steps of:

a) inputting image data encoded by using intra-picture coding and inter-picture coding;

b) decoding the encoded image data input in said step a), the encoded image data including intra-picture encoded image data and inter-picture encoded image data;

c) performing the intra-picture coding on the image data decoded in said step b), and storing the encoded image data in a storage medium;

d) decoding the image data stored in the storage medium, and editing the decoded image data; and

e) encoding the image data edited in said step d).

77. (Twice Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising:

a) input means for inputting image data encoded by using intra-picture coding and inter-picture coding, wherein the intra-picture coding is forcedly executed in a circle of a predetermined number of pictures;

b) instruction means for instructing [editing] an image to be edited;

c) decoding means for decoding a part of the encoded image data input by said input means, in accordance with the output of said instruction means, wherein when the image to be edited has been subjected to inter-picture coding, said decoding means decodes the part of the encoded image data [in units of the predetermined number of pictures] necessary to decode at least the image to be edited;

d) editing means for editing the image data processed by said decoding means; and

e) encoding means for encoding the image data processed by said editing means.

86. (Twice Amended) An image processing method comprising the steps of:

inputting image data encoded by using intra-picture coding and inter-picture coding, wherein the intra-picture coding is forcedly executed in a circle of a predetermined number of pictures;

instructing [editing] an image to be edited;

decoding a part of the encoded image data input in said input step, in accordance with the instruction in said instructing step, wherein when the image to be edited has been subjected to inter-picture coding, said decoding step decodes the part of the encoded image data [in units of the predetermined number of pictures] necessary to decode at least the image to be edited;

editing the image data processed in said decoding step; and

encoding the image data processed in said editing step.